11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 461 leisurely style of life of his social superiors. He would prefer, if he could but acquire the necessary servants and corvée labor, to "cause to plow" (*ās-ārrash*) rather than to plow (*ārrash*) himself.

*565 461 181 577 183 [423] If, in sketching the Amhara peasant's conception of the "good life," one moves from the sphere of goals to that of norms and values, one may say that while work as such is not conceived as an absolute value, the work of plowing one's land is regarded as a primary moral responsibility. The peasant's obligations toward his land extend beyond working it, moreover. At the local level he is supposed to keep it within his family, and should be ready to defend his rights to land use against all comers. At the national level he should help to keep the land "free"; that is, out of the hands of all foreigners.

*565 • 98 181 183 [262] [301] Obligations toward the deity are mostly of a ritual nature. Observing the fasts and avoiding forbidden foods are perhaps most important of all. It is also important to wear the symbol of the Ethiopian Christian, the *mātsĕb*, a simple neckcord often holding a wrought silver cross. The church should be visited and heavy work avoided on the appropriate holy days. Prayers should not be neglected. When one passes by a church he should bow three times; when he enters a church compound he should "greet" the ark by kissing some stone or pole of the church building.

*565 577 181 183 The Amhara's ideal of Christian piety does, however, include certain good works which should be carried out in order to gain God's favor—giving alms to the indigent, visiting the sick or the prisoner, and aiding the wayfarer (who is referred to as a "guest of God"). But such injunctions play a slight part in

*565 577 673 181 183 the Amhara's rhetoric of social morality when compared to his extensive code of "shames," or *nawr*. Stealing and breaking the fasts are among the very worst *nawr*. Other *nawr* include murder without good reason or by a shameful means like poison; adultery; insulting or not showing proper respect toward others; failing to observe the conventions concerning engagement and marriage; failing to revenge offenses; and gossiping about others and thereby stirring up trouble. Though the sense of being shamed before God provides some measure of internal self-control in these matters, the Amhara peasant avoids immoral acts primarily for fear of being the victim of what others will say (*yelugntă*), so that he will not be "seized by shame" (*hāfrat*) or suffer humiliation (*wardat*). His prime moral concern is not to be caught in the act of committing some *nawr*.

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*565 57 181 183 Positive moral obligations to persons outside the circle of close ones are thus kept to a minimum. Following the conventions of respect toward superiors and peers is all that is enjoined. The good life for the Amhara peasant is lived within a minimal, Hobbesian order. The ideal neighbor is defined as one who does not touch others (*saw aynakŏm*). He does not touch another's land, wife, money, or personal feelings.

*565 602 571 181 183 Among *xamad*, however, a much warmer ideal of human relations obtains.